

Message Text

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SUBJECT: POST-HELSINKI CONFERENCES

1. USIS ROME, WITH COOPERATION OF OTHER POSTS AND ITALIAN SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION (SIOI), STAGED TWO HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCES ON "EUROPEAN POLITICAL-MILITARY SITUATION AFTER HELSINKI" IN ROME AND FLORENCE DECEMBER 12 AND 13.

2. ROME CONFERENCE, ALL-DAY AFFAIR INCLUDING LUNCH, WAS PRESENTED BY EMBASSY ROME, WITHOUT CO-SPONSOR. 59 ITALIAN SCHOLARS, JOURNALISTS, PARTY AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HEARD FOUR SPEAKERS ON ASPECTS OF POST-HELSINKI DEVELOPMENTS, AND PARTICIPATED IN ACTIVE DEBATE WHICH REVEALED (AND DEVELOPED) LIVELY AWARENESS OF LIMITS TO DETENTE AND ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS. CONCLUSION THAT STEPS TAKEN THUS FAR TOWARD DETENTE DO NOT CONSTITUTE BASIS FOR ANY RELAXATION OF WESTERN SECURITY SYSTEM, ESPECIALLY IN FACE OF SOVIET MILITARY TRENDS, WAS UNDERSCORED BY CONCLUDING STATEMENTS OF THREE FEATURED SPEAKERS: ENZO BETTIZA, TOP INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMENTATOR /IL GIORNALE; RICHARD BURT, DEPUTY DIRECTOR IISS LONDON; LESLIE H. BROWN, FORMER DIRECTOR OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY POLICY AND PLANNING, BUREAU OF POLITICO-MILITARY AFFAIRS. FOURTH

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SPEAKER, PROFESSOR CESARE MERLINI, DIRECTOR ITALIAN INTERNATIONAL

AFFAIRS INSTITUTE (IAI), WAS MORE SANGUINE RE DETENTE BUT TREATED DIFFICULTY OF ARMS CONTROL PROGRESS SERIOUSLY. SPECIAL INTEREST WAS SHOWN BY ALL PARTICIPANTS IN ARMS CONTROL PROBLEMS RAISED BY NEW TECHNOLOGY, ESPECIALLY FOLLOWING BURT'S COMMENTARY ON CRUISE MISSILE.

3. CAST OF CHARACTERS, EXCEPT BURT, CHANGED FOR FLORENCE, WHICH WAS ALSO AN ALL-DAY CONFERENCE AT VILLA OUTSIDE CITY. FLORENCE MEETING CO-SPONSORED BY SIOI. JOINING BUT WERE SIMON SERFATY, DIRECTOR BOLOGNA CENTER, JOHNS HOPKINS; PROFESSOR UMBERTO GORI, U. OF FLORENCE POLITICAL SCIENTIST; STEFANO SILVESTRI, VICE DIRECTOR IAI (AND FORMER IIS RESEARCH ASSOCIATE). SOPHISTICATION OF DISCUSSION LOWER THAN IN ROME, BUT, WITH CHALLENGING PRESENTATIONS BY BURT, SERFATY AND SILVESTRI, FUTURE OF US MILITARY COMMITMENT AND EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES (ESPECIALLY NUCLEAR) RECEIVED REALISTIC AND INFORMATIVE TREATMENT. ABILITY OF REGIONAL PARTICIPANTS TO HANDLE QUESTIONS OF WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY WAS WELL BELOW THAT IN ROME, COMPENSATED BY STRONG POLITICAL DEBATE STIMULATED BY SERFATY. 48 PARTICIPANTS REPRESENTED HEAVIER EMPHASIS ON ACADEMICS BUT WITH SAME GENERAL MIX AS IN ROME.

4. SEVERAL INNOVATIONS FOR POST IN THIS PACKAGE. ROME MEETING WAS FIRST ATTEMPT TO STAGE MAJOR CONFERENCE WITHIN SECURITY OBJECTIVE WITHOUT CO-SPONSORSHIP AND USING MISSION OFFICER (DPAO BURNETTE) AS MODERATOR. EXCELLENT RESPONSE TO INVITATIONS AND WIDE PARTICIPATION REVEALED NO BARRIER CAUSED BY DIRECT EMBASSY INVITATION. STRONG APPETITE HERE FOR AVRIOUS DISCUSSIONS THESE TOPICS AND HIGH LEVEL OF EXPERTISE MADE ROME MEETING BEST SUCH EXCHANGE BURT HAD SEEN RECENTLY IN EUROPE, ACCORDING TO HIM. DIFFICULTY OF BACK-TO-BACK CONFERENCES NECESSITATED FLORENCE CO-SPONSORSHIP AND, DESPITE STRAIN ON BURT (AND POST), RESULTED IN OPTIMAL REGIONAL PARTICIPATION, INCLUDING BOLOGNA CONTINGENT AND TWO EXCELLENT MILAN EXPERTS.

5. WEEK-END /IL GIORNALE/ (SERGIO FEDERICI) CARRIES REVIEW OF REMARKS OF SEVERAL ROME PARTICIPANTS, EGINNING WITH BETTIZA'S ASSERTION THAT, FOLLOWING HELSINKI, THERE HAS BEEN AN UPSURGE OF SOVIET INTERVENTIONISM. EXCELLENT SANEIO RIZZI PIECE IN UNCLASSIFIED

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/CORRIERE DELLA SERA/ CONTAINS SOLID DEXCRIPTION OF FLORENCE DISCUSSION, INCLUDING BURT OPINION THAT ONLY ATMOSPHERICS HAVE CHANGED, SERFATY DESCRIPTION OF IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS IN ALLIANCE CONSULTATION AND PREDICTION BY PROFESSOR GIUSEPPE MAMMARELLA (STANDORD U. DIRECTOR IN FLORENCE) THAT CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS WILL HAVE LONG-TERM RESULT OF GREATER ATLANTIC COHESION.

6. ELEVEN YOUNG DIPLOMATS ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY WERE GUESTS AT ROME CONFERENCE. THEY HAVE UNANIMOUSLY REPORTED TO INSTITUTE'S DIRECTOR THAT "DAY OF STUDY" AT CONFERENCE WAS "INTERESTING AND OUTSTANDING". DIRECTOR HAS ASSIGNED EACH YOUNG DIPLOMAT TO PREPARE PAPER ON DAY'S DISCUSSION. FROM ELEVEN PAPERS, DIRECTOR WILL PREPARE AND DISTRIBUTE MINISTRY-WIDE COMMENTARY ON CONFERENCE. ALSO, BURT RECEIVED OFFER PUBLICATION HIS ROME REMARKS, FOR WHICH WE WILL PROVIDE TRANSCRIPTION.

7. NET PRODUCT OF TWO DAYS MUST HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT GAIN IN ITALIAN KNOWLEDGE OF CURRENT POLITICAL MILITARY BALANCE AND SENSITIVITY TO US THINKING THESE SUBJECTS. AMERSON

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